A Commentary on Silius Italicus' Punica 13. Intertextuality and Narrative Structure

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Appendix: Silius and Statius

Assessing the relation between the contemporary poets Silius and Statius is notoriously difficult.[1] While there are many instances where one arguably influenced the other, it is much harder to establish exactly who imitates whom at any given point, particularly since we should take into account the real possibility of mutual influence. There was quite a long period when both men were active writers,[2] and the two poets may have been familiar with each other's poetry well before publication; both are known to have given *recitationes* of their work.[3] Another reason why it remains a hard (and often impossible) task to determine the direction of influence, even if we suppose there is only a single direction, is that there is simply no 'standard' way of identifying source and imitation. The methodological problems surrounding the issue have recently been well expounded again in Lovatt (2010), who draws attention to the inherent subjectivity of our use of criteria.[4]

In this appendix, I have attempted to make an overview of the intertextual links between *Punica* 13 and Statius' *Thebaid* and *Silvae*, without claiming exhaustiveness;[5] only those phrases, lines and scenes were selected which display a parallelism (or inversion) in phrasing, situation or thought which is unique to both authors. In most cases, the direction of influence may be argued both ways; for brevity's sake, the discussion will focus primarily on the more outstanding parallels. Parallelism will be indicated with (/), inversion with (||).

[1] This paragraph does not go into the chronological relation of Valerius Flaccus and Silius. The most obvious and sustained form of intertextuality with the *Argonautica* in book 13 is that outlined in Gen.intr. § 4.3.3; since Silius' narrative is an inversion of both Valerius' narrative and of their common Vergilian models, and since Silius attributes to Pan the unusual role of peace-bringer versus his more traditional role of panic-monger in Valerius, it seems more plausible that Silius used Valerius rather than vice versa.

[2] Statius' *Thebaid* was presumably written between 79/80 and 91/92, his *Silvae* between 89 and 96 (see Nauta 2002: 443–444); for the *Punica*, see Gen.intr. § 6.

[3] Silius: Plin. Ep. 3.7.4; Statius: *Silv*. 5.2.160–163, Juv. 7.82–86. Cf. Soerink 2013: 262 "It is conceivable that, say, Statius heard Silius reciting a passage from his *Punica* and used it in composing his *Thebaid*, and that Silius, in turn, after the publication of the *Thebaid* in 92 CE, used Statius in revising his *Punica*. And one might envisage a literary milieu in which the poets could exchange ideas in different ways as well."

[4] She offers a post-modern way out of the problem by maintaining that "we should look for readings which offer the most interesting story" (Lovatt 2010: 158); see also Hulls 2013 and Soerink 2013 for similar perceptive discussions of this complex matter.

[5] The *Achilleid* is notably absent, mainly because I have found few (verbal) parallels. A possible conceptual parallel is the viewing of Homeric *exempla* by Silius' Scipio and Statius' Achilles; see Intr. 762–805 with fn.27.

I. THE *THEBAID*

Capaneus and Hannibal (Intr. 1–29)

Thebaid	*Punica*	
10.921–924	12.612–616	The sky darkens; the enemy city can no longer be seen.
10.888–889	12.671–674	Where are Jupiter's thunderbolts now at Thebes || Where were Jupiter's thunderbolts once at Cannae?
10.883–896, 899–900	12.707–724	The gods are divided, and none stands against Capaneus. || The gods defend Rome against Hannibal in unison.
10.849–852	12.725	Beginning of gigantomachy of the attacking hero. || End of gigantomachy of the attacking hero.
10.840–842 (cf. 11.10)	13.1–3	With a grim gaze at the top of the citadel, Capaneus begins to climb. || When Jupiter's citadel can no longer be seen, Hannibal turns back to the city grim faced.
11.23–25	13.19–20	The Argives / Carthaginians are in terror of Jupiter's wrath.

Both Capaneus and Hannibal are a *contemptor deorum*; their assault upon Thebes and Rome, respectively, is at the same time a challenge to Jupiter. Silius' narrative in *Punica* 12 is the reverse of Statius' in *Thebaid* 10; in the first, Jupiter's warning shot (fusing Hannibal's weapons, but leaving him alive) opens the scene, whereas in the second, his thunderbolt strikes Capaneus only at the end, killing him. In the beginning of the next book, both men are still grim looking (*Theb*. 11.10 *torvus adhuc visu*, Sil. 13.2–3 *torvos ... vultus*), but Capaneus is dead and Hannibal very much alive and ready to try again. In fact, his preparations to return to Rome mirror the beginning of Capaneus' theomachic ascent. Whereas the Argives flee when Capaneus has fallen by the Jovian bolt, the frightened Carthaginians are reinvigorated by their leader. Is Silius' Hannibal a new and improved Capaneus, unfazed by a direct hit of Jupiter's lightning, or is the death of Capaneus Statius' correction of Hannibal's implausible survival? Since at the beginning of *Punica* 13 Hannibal is attempting to replay literary roles (e.g. that of Lucan's Caesar), it seems attractive to read the passages in books 12 and 13 as Hannibal's double re-enactment of Capaneus' assault, rather than vice versa.[6]

Thebes and Capua (Intr. 299–347)

Thebaid	*Punica*	
11.325–326	13.146–147	The horse of Eteocles rejoices at the trumpets and does not fear the bugles prior to the duel with Polynices. || The

[6] In book 12, Silius would then also begin where Statius had ended (with a thunderbolt) and end the motif of Gigantomachy with which Statius begins.

		horse of Taurea is nervous and refuses to stand still with the braying of the bugles prior to the duel with Claudius.
12.595	13.174 (cf. 13.167)	Theseus' spear thirsting for the guilty blood of Cleon. / Claudius eager to draw Taurea's blood.
12.8	13.257	No rest for the victorious defenders. || Peaceful rest for the victorious attackers.
12.13	13.302	The defenders leave the city in bewilderment.
12.727	13.324–325	The fury of the Athenians / Romans abates.
12.688	13.375	The wicked grin of Creon before his last fight. / The wicked grin of Taurea before his suicide.

The parallelism in the aftermath of the sieges of Thebes and Capua is discussed in Gen.intr. § 4.3.3. It is rewarding to read the two scenes together. A possible reading may be that through the parallel with Thebes, Silius casts his Capua as a city defined by civil war.[7] Their besiegers, the Romans, are not cast as fratricidal attackers, however, but are instead modelled after Theseus' Athenians; the poet thereby emphasizes Roman righteousness and suggests that their siege of the city will *end* civil war, just as Theseus' attack of Thebes restores order and brings the *Thebaid* to an end.[8]

To this may be added the portrayal of Scipio directly after the fall of Capua at the opening of the *Nekyia* episode:

Thebaid	*Punica*	
12.186–193	13.394–397	Argia / Scipio are urged to action by a vision of their dead loved ones.
12.563–564	13.457–458	The Argives / Appius Claudius lie unburied for seven / nine days already.
12.138	13.464	Preservation of the bodies of the Argives / Appius Claudius.
12.558	13.465	Creon forbids cremation and thus entry into the underworld to the Argives. / Appius' family tarries with cremating him and he therefore urges Scipio to allow him to enter the underworld.
12.570–572	13.467–468	Theseus is exhorted to act and bury the Argives, before other

[7] Both Capua's conflict with Rome and that between Eteocles and Polynices were based upon the refusal to share power: *Theb*. 1.1 *alternaque regna*, Sil. 11.60 *alternatos sociato consule fasces*; indeed, Silius may well have included Capua's demand for a share in the consulship (a story which is dismissed by Livy, see n.99–103 *iura petita consulis alterni*) to create his Capua in the image of Thebes. The difference lies in which party makes unjustified demands; with Statius, it is Eteocles who usurps sole power, whereas in the *Punica*, Capua contests Roman power solely to have an excuse to side with Hannibal (cf. 11.57) in a bid for its own supremacy over Italy (13.264–266).

[8] The inverted echo of Statius' prelude of the fratricidal duel between Eteocles and Polynices would then signal that the duel of Taurea and Claudius (which is a mise-en-abyme for the siege as a whole) is *not* of the same nature as the duel in the *Thebaid*.

		nations which observe funeral rites will be distressed. / Scipio promises to bury Appius soon, adducing the practices of other nations.
12.173–174	13.468–470	The wives of the Argives disagree on the best way to seek burial for their husbands. / Nations differ about the best way of burial.
books 7–12	13.471–487	

This sequence seems to lend itself best to a reading in which Silius is using Statius as a model. Appius' request for cremation represents in miniature the central issue of *Thebaid* 12, namely the ban on burial of the Argives. Scipio's actions and words align him with Theseus, the hero who granted burial; his catalogue of foreign funeral rites bears a striking correspondence to the various 'substitute burials' of the Argive leaders in *Thebaid* 7–12. See for a full discussion Van der Keur 2013; see also Intr. 417–493.

Nekyia

Thebaid	*Punica*	
4.451	13.427	The pit dug for the blood offering. Sen. *Oed*. 550 *effossa tellus* Stat. *tellure cavata* Sil. *cavare refossam ... humum*
4.579	13.488	Manto cedes centrality to Tiresias. / Autonoe cedes centrality to the ghost of the ancient Sibyl.
4.607	13.621–622	Laius knows his grandson by face, so he refuses to drink the blood. || Pomponia drinks in order to learn the face of her son.
other correspondences in the portrayal of the underworld:		
1.102	13.561	Tisiphone shuttling between the upper and lower world. / Death shuttling between the gates of the underworld.
4.523	13.565	The Phlegethon. Verg. *A*. 6.551 *Phlegethon, torquetque sonantia saxa* Stat. *fumidus ... Phlegethon incendia volvit* Sil. *resonans saxosa incendia torquet* (with *resonans* emphasizing the allusion); cf. 13.570 *fumiferum* (of the Styx)
1.89–91	13.574–576	Drinking from the Cocytus / Acheron.
4.525–527, 8.21–25	2.673–674, 13.601–604	Furies surround the throne of Dis.
7.579 (cf. 1.113)	13.611	The Fury's snaky whip.

Naturally, the underworld scenes of Statius and Silius share many other elements beyond the parallels cited above; these few have been selected for a striking similarity in phrasing or thought. The most notable correspondence between the *Nekyiai* of the two poets is the prominence of the 'lesser' *vates* (Manto / Autonoe). Silius' Autonoe arguably represents her creator and his claim to a position in the literary tradition; perhaps the same could be maintained for Manto in the *Thebaid*. But whereas the latter's role as daughter of Tiresias is supplied by the literary tradition, Autonoe is wholly Silius' invention. Could this be an indication that Silius drew on Statius' presentation of Manto for inspiration (Intr. 494–516)? At a few points, the text of the *Punica* seems to combine Statius' phrasing with that of their common predecessors (13.427, 565). We may be able to witness true interplay in the four scenes picturing the Furies around the throne of Dis; focusing on the second scene of each poet, Silius' *circum errant Furiae* (13.604) in its vividness seems to me an emulation of Statius' *stant Furiae circum* (8.24).

Miscellaneous

Thebaid	*Punica*	
2.462	13.749	Verg. *A*. 6.878–879 *heu pietas, heu prisca fides* Sil. *o pietas, o sancta fides* (on Hannibal) Stat. *heu pietas, heu sancta fides* (on Eteocles; cf. 5.627 *pietas haec magna fidesque!*, Hypsipyle about herself) In Statius the phrase is ironic both times; in Silius there is dramatic irony; might Statius' ironic use have paved the way for Silius' use?
5.71	13.547	Wedding torches turned funeral fires.
9.661	13.857	Statius' phrase is probably the model, since Silius' words are more unexpected: it is not fated death (like that of Parthenopaeus), but (Sulla's) fated birth which cannot be prevented by the gods.
11.549–550	11.588, 13.855	The (illegally) long reigns (*longum imperium* / *longa imperia*) of Eteocles, Hannibal and Marius.
11.169–170	13.855–856	Cf. Luc. 7.88 What is fated cannot be postponed: the battle of Pharsalus / the Theban fratricidal duel / the birth of Sulla.

II. THE *SILVAE*

In regard to the relation with the *Punica*, the *Silvae* should be approached differently from the *Thebaid* by virtue of Statius' higher speed of composition. The potential for true interplay is more limited; while it is imaginable that Statius would allude to the *Punica*, and Silius in turn used the same poems of the *Silvae* for new passages in his epic (or for his revision of the old ones), it is less likely that the reverse would happen (i.e. that Silius alludes to a poem in Statius' *Silvae* when it has not yet been published, and that Statius in a final revision of this poem in turn picked up Silius' imitation). Since the various books (and sometimes individual poems) of the *Silvae* are quite accurately datable, mutual allusions might even go some way towards establishing a *terminus ante / post quem* for individual passages in the *Punica* (provided that both the presence and the direction of influence can be stated with any certainty). As far as I could gather, the interrelation of the *Punica* and the *Silvae* has never been studied in detail; below I will list a few notable correspondences, followed by a case study—an exercise in reading the *Silvae* through the lens of the *Punica*.

Silvae	*Punica*	
1.1.66–67	13.562–563	Verg. *A*. 2.136 *... / limosoque lacu* Sil. *pigra vorago / limosique lacus* Stat. *sacrata vorago / famosique lacus* Either Statius picked up and modified Silius' expansion of Vergil's phrase, or Silius recognized Statius' Vergilian model and combined Vergil's phrase with Statius' expansion.
1.2.191–193	13.615, 619–620	Stat. *quis septemgeminae posuisset moenia Romae imperii Latiale caput, <ni>* Dardana *furto cepisset Martem, nec me prohibente, sacerdos* Sil. *fecunda Iovis* Pomponia *furto.* *...* *quae ni provisa fuissent,* *Sidonia Iliacas nunc virgo accenderet aras* In both passages, Venus has saved the future of Rome through a union of god and mortal woman (*furtum*). The boast of Statius' Venus entails a subject known to all Romans (and which was, moreover, immortalized by Ennius): the birth of Romulus from Ilia and Mars. Silius' Venus adds *another* like union: Scipio's birth from Pomponia and Jupiter. Some twenty lines later, Pomponia's tale picks up Ilia's similar tale in Ennius (see n. 637–640a). There are three possibilities: i) Silius modelled his lines after Statius' to reinforce the correspondences between Pomponia and Ilia / Scipio and Romulus.

		ii) Statius recognized Silius' Ennian intertext and used a similar phrase for his more 'orthodox' list of Venus' role in Roman history to show this. iii) Both share a common (lost) model; Ennius would be a likely candidate.
2.7.113–115	13.798–803	In Elysium, Lucan / Homer is accompanied by his characters.
5.1.45–46	13.547–548	Women who have already experienced wedding torches. || Girls who have not yet experienced wedding torches.
5.1.193 (cf. 2.7.112)	13.631	Pomponia / Priscilla admitted to Elysium.
5.1.253–254	13.545–546	Sometimes a ghost of a woman arrives in the underworld *with the praises of her husband*, and she is welcomed by Proserpina. / The seventh gate is opened for women, where *chaste* Proserpina tends the groves.
5.1.256	13.550	Entry into Elysium, where a light disperses the darkness.
5.3.275	13.403, 506	Stat. *fas mihi sic patrios contingere vultus* Sil. 403 *adspectus orat contingere patrum* 506 *patrios visu contingere manes* At 5.3.266–276, Statius envies those who saw their dead loved ones again, adducing the *katabaseis* of Aeneas and Orpheus and the return of Alcestis to Admetus and of Protesilaus to Laodamia; his wish to touch once more the face of his father (5.3.275) closely parallels Scipio's similar desire (Sil. 13.403 and 506). Is this an oblique reference to yet another *katabasis*, yet another reunion of father and son, narrated in the contemporary epic of Statius' colleague? Or is it the other way around (which would be remarkable given the personal quality of Statius' poem)?[9]

A poem which will be discussed to some length is *Silv*. 4.3, which celebrates the *via Domitiana* and at the same time is a statement of Statius' poetics.[10] The poem has a few features in common with *Punica* 13. The most notable one is the appearance of the Sibyl of Cumae,[11] who delivers a prophecy about (and to) emperor Domitian, similar to the prophecy of Silius' Sibyl about Scipio. Both Sibyls claim to have foretold the coming of

[9] The chronology of the composition of *Silv*. 5.3 is a vexed problem (see Nauta 2002: 195–198, Gibson 2006: 260–266). Internal inconsistencies have given rise to the suggestion that part of the poem is a later insertion, datable to 90 or 91 AD (Nauta limits this insertion to lines 225–238, but there remains a possibility that other passages are similarly part of a later revision).

[10] See e.g. Smolenaars 2006 and especially Newlands 2002: 284–325 and Reitz 2013: 137–172.

their addressee (Sil. 13.499–500 *te ... cecini*; Stat. *Silv*. 4.3.124 *dicebam: veniet*); both also address him personally rather than through the medium of the Sibylline books (13.500–502; 4.3.141–144). We may also compare the Augustan panegyrical motifs which both poets use for their representation of Domitian and Scipio. With Statius, these motifs are found both in the Sibyl's prophecy and in the speech of the river god Vulturnus, who is grateful that the emperor tamed him with a bridge and a canalized stream;[12] the same Augustan intertexts underlie another scene in *Punica* 13, the Sibyl's eulogy of Alexander the Great, which serves an important role in the portrayal of Scipio as a model Roman leader.[13]

So far, the connection between the two poems may seem superficial at best; they share common intertexts and a Sibyl prophesying in person to a Roman leader (but even this can be traced back to *Aeneid* 6). Still, both texts may be enriched when read together. Indeed, Statius seems to invite comparison with the *Punica*, when he asks at the opening of the poem: 'What monstrous sound of hard flint and heavy iron has filled paved Appia on the side that borders the sea?', and then continues to say that it is surely not the sound of Punic troops with their perfidious leader shaking the fields of Campania (*Silv*. 4.3.1–6). Reitz (2013: 158) interprets the notion of loud sound as part of Statius' "formulation of a bold poetic aesthetics for the *Silvae*"; the greatness of his poetic subject resonates in his thundering poetry. What can be heard, then, is not only the construction of Domitian's highway, but also the poetry which celebrates it with an appropriate voice. Following this interpretation, Statius seems to contrast the 'noise' of his poetry with that of Silius; perhaps we might paraphrase 'What is this new kind of noise? It is assuredly not the same as that epic on the Punic war which we have all heard being recited lately.'[14]

A second invitation to compare Statius' poem with the *Punica* follows in the speech of Vulturnus. The river god is thankful that he is not longer a muddy stream, like the Cinyphian Bagrada snaking its way with silent banks amidst the Punic fields: *qualis Cinyphius tacente ripa / Poenos Bagrada serpit inter agros*.[15] It has been recognized in recent years that these lines echo Callimachus' comparison of bad poetry (i.e. longwinded epics) to muddy Euphrates.[16] Scholars have also acknowledged the epic quality of the Bagrada, which features at Luc. 4.588 and prominently in *Punica* 6, with its battle between the Romans and the enormous snake (cf. *serpit*) in the river; the lines have never been read, however, as a metapoetic challenge to the *Punica*.[17] The *Punica* represents what Vulturnus

[11] Statius cedes his place to this *vates sanctior* (4.3.120), just as Silius' Autonoe (representing the poet) makes way before her illustrious predecessor who will voice the prophecy on Scipio (13.409 *maiore vate canentur*).

[12] See Coleman *ad* 4.3.128, 154, 155–157, Van Dam 1992: 204–207, Smolenaars 2006: 230–231, 237–244.

[13] See Intr. 762–805; for some parallels between Silius and Statius, see there fn.10 and 11, and n.763–766 *ponte Niphaten adstrinxit*.

[14] After the comparison with Hannibal at 4.3.4–6, Statius also notes that it is not Nero who is heard (vss.7–8); possibly a contrast is made first between poets (Statius – Silius) and then emperors with building projects (Domitian – Nero). There is a notion of (poetic and imperial) rivalry and emulation in the comparison: *certe non* (4.3.4), "assuredly not" like Hannibal (Silius?) or like Nero.

[15] *Silv*. 4.3.90–91.

[16] Call. *Hymn*. 2.108–112; see Newlands 2002: 306–309, Smolenaars 2006: 231–233, Gibson 2006: xxvi, Lóio 2012: 283, Reitz 2013: 161–162; Lóio argues for a more sustained interaction with Callimachus (especially Call. *frg*. 384 Pf. = *Victoria Sosibii*) in the entire poem.

[17] The battle with the serpent is also mentioned in various other sources (Liv. *Per*. 18.1, V.Max. 1.8.*ext*.19, Gell. 7.3.1, Plin. *Nat.* 8.37, Flor. *Epit*. 1.18.20; cf. Soerink 2013: 363 n.15), but the combination of (1) Bagrada and (2) *serpit* in the context of a Callimachean disparagement of (3) *epic* seems to point rather cogently to the *Punica*. In

is glad to be no longer: a meandering epic which is, by implication, filled with mud.[18] Statius' river is transformed into a straight, clear and brilliant stream (4.3.92–94); the metamorphosis suggests the poet's innovation, not only of eulogizing the emperor and his achievements in a lyric rather than epic voice, but also of adapting this lyric voice to fit its themes.[19]

Statius' claim to generic innovation resurges in the Sibyl's prophecy. She hails Domitian as a "deity by me foreseen and placed on record".[20] There is no need for him, however, to consult her words "unrolled on crumbling sheets" (4.3.141 *putribus evoluta chartis*), that is, in the Sibylline books; she will deliver her prophecy to him personally, as he deserves (144 *ut mereris*).[21] Smolenaars (2006: 240) notes the echo of Catullus' programmatic first poem, with its celebration of Nepos' daring innovation in prose (1.6 *omne aevum tribus explicare cartis*) which mirrors Catullus' own revolutionary poetics of *ars* and *brevitas*; he concludes that Statius "by referring to Catullus' poetics seems to announce a modern song, better adapted to the refined culture of Domitian's times". That is not the whole story, though. The statement in Catullus' poem is also a generic one; he will not write long epic, but short lyric poems.[22] By dismissing the old "sheets", Statius also states that for his Sibylline prophecy, he will use a different genre than the one with which such prophecy is traditionally associated, epic, at least since *Aeneid* 6—and perhaps also *Punica* 13?

Let us try to read the two scenes both ways. Silius' Sibyl in *Punica* 13 states, like Statius', that she foresaw the coming of Scipio, among her other visions of future ages and the future deeds of the *Aeneadae*; but she continues in quite a different way: Scipio's people did not have enough care for her words, nor the sense to collect and preserve her sayings (13.499–502). This grumbling Sibyl is almost the complete opposite of the one in the *Silvae*, who told Domitian with cheer that there was no need for him to consult the Sibylline books guarded by the Quindecimviri.[23] The two passages share a common

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the light of Silius' passage, Newlands (2002: 307–308) sees the reference to Bagrada as a "powerful reminder of the river's role in epic poetry as a heroic and indeed moral force", contrasting with the Vulturnus which cares only about cleanliness. Smolenaars (2006: 232–233) recognizes *serpit* as a reference to the serpent, but does not explore its metapoetic potential in relation to the *Punica* ("a clever reference to that historical battle in the best Alexandrian manner").

[18] Is *tacente ripa* perhaps another dig at the *Punica*, "silent, unexciting epic", unlike the noise of Statius' new form of poetry? Cf. especially Sil. 13.4–6 on the silent, and *inglorius* (and small!) river Tutia. Statius' epithet *tacente* is remarkable, since silent banks are more commonly associated with the narrow streams extolled by lyric poetry (cf. Sil. 4.350 *tacitas ... ripas*, of Horace's Liris which Statius' Vulturnus seeks to challenge).

[19] Statius does not simply adopt the Callimachean ideal; his river is still big, but no longer muddy, and is fit to challenge both the sea (epic) and the pure Liris (lyric); the most convincing reconstruction of Statius' poetics here is that by Reitz (2013: 162), who observes that Statius' poetry "deliberately *departs* from the Callimachean stylistic ideals, although it still proudly claims for itself stylistic purity and brilliance (*nitente*, 92)".

[20] Stat. *Silv*. 4.3.140 *provisum mihi conditumque numen*.

[21] Van Dam (1992: 205) observes the contrast with Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, where the Sibylline prophecy is read out to Pollio.

[22] The association with Catullus is not, however, a simple one; this poem does not sing personal *otium*, like Catullus' poetry, but national themes; it may be written in Catullus' metre (hendecasyllables), but it is the longest such poem in the *Silvae*.

[23] Earlier in the same poem, Statius spoke of *quieta Cume*, "quiet Cumae", perhaps to suggest that the oracle was silent in his day, and that the only Sibylline prophecies available were the written ones. This would make her personal prophecy to Domitian all the more remarkable and special. Support for this interpretation might be found

intertext in the promise of Vergil's Aeneas to the Sibyl that he will preserve her sayings and assign priests to take care of them.[24] Vergil's two successors have adapted these lines in quite different directions. Is Statius trying to outdo Silius, whose Scipio is 'merely' foretold among various other things, whereas in his own poem the Sibyl's prophecy on Domitian is singled out and, moreover, repeated willingly (*ut mereris*) and of her own accord? Or should we read *Punica* 13 as an epic response to the generic innovation by Statius, who appropriates the prophecy of *Aeneid* 6 for his own lyric poetry—in other words, do the Sibyl's complaints about a lack of *cura* displayed by Scipio's people for her words perhaps hint at the dismissal of epic, the traditional (perhaps 'proper') vehicle for prophecy, as 'crumbling old sheets' in the poem of Silius' contemporary?[25]

in a comparison with the *Punica*, as Silius notes at 8.531 that in Cumae, there used to be an oracle (*quondam fatorum conscia Cyme*, "Cumae which could once foretell the future"), i.e. no longer. Silius' Sibyl, too, refers to her written prophecies, before delivering her prophecy to Scipio, marking him as a specially favoured individual, like Domitian.

[24] Verg. *A*. 6.73–74 *hic ego namque tuas sortis arcanaque fata / dicta meae genti ponam, lectosque sacrabo, / alma, viros*; cf. Stat. *Silv*. 4.3.141–143 *nec iam putribus evoluta chartis / sollemni prece Quindecimvirorum / perlustra mea dicta* and Sil. 13.500–502 *sed non sat digna mearum / cura tuis vocum. nec enim conquirere dicta aut servare fuit proavis sollertia vestris*. Cf. (on Statius) Smolenaars 2006: 239–240.

[25] In addition to *Silvae* 4.3, another poem in the same book and written at about the same time may also be read in conjunction with the *Punica*. In poem 4.6, Statius celebrates the statue of Hercules owned by Vindex. One of its former owners was Hannibal, so the poet tells; the details he supplies suggest inspiration by the *Punica*, and especially the Saguntum episode in book 2 (see Marks 2013: 298–299). Since poem 4.6, like 4.3, lends itself to be interpreted in terms of Statius' poetics (Newlands 2002: 73–87), this may be another instance of Statius as the poet of a 'small' lyric genre evoking contrast with Silius, the epic poet.